CLAIMS

1. A method of noise estimation during a finger merge condition, comprising:

determining noise estimates from a plurality of finger processors;

comparing the noise estimates to determine if they are at least within a certain delta offset of each other; and

before combining noise estimates, taking a corrective action to prevent noise under-estimation.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein taking a corrective action involves blocking the noise estimate from being included in a combined noise estimate total.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the combined noise estimate total forms the basis of a fast forward power control decision.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising sorting the noise estimates before comparing.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising determining whether the noise estimates are sorted.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising determining a dis-sorting distance before performing the sorting.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein taking a corrective action involves applying a correction factor to a combined total noise estimate.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the combined noise estimate total forms the basis of a fast forward power control decision.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising sorting the noise estimates before comparing.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising determining whether the noise estimates are sorted.

11. The method of claim 9, further comprising determining a dis-sorting distance before performing the sorting.

12. A noise estimator for improving signal quality estimation during a finger merge condition, comprising:

means for determining noise estimates from a plurality of finger processors;

means for comparing the noise estimates to determine if they are at least within a certain delta offset of each other; and

means for taking a corrective action, before combining noise estimates, to prevent noise under-estimation.

13. The noise estimator of claim 12, wherein the means for taking a corrective action involves blocking the noise estimate from being included in a combined noise estimate total.

14. The noise estimator of claim 13, wherein the combined noise estimate total forms the basis of a fast forward power control decision.

15. The noise estimator of claim 13, further comprising means for sorting the noise estimates before comparing.

16. The noise estimator of claim 15, further comprising before means for determining whether the noise estimates are sorted.

17. The noise estimator of claim 15, further comprising means for determining a dis-sorting distance before performing the sorting.

18. The noise estimator of claim 12, wherein taking a corrective action involves applying a correction factor to a combined total noise estimate.

19. The noise estimator of claim 18, wherein the combined noise estimate total forms the basis of a fast forward power control decision.

20. The noise estimator of claim 18, further comprising means for sorting the noise estimates before comparing.

21. The noise estimator of claim 20, further comprising means for determining whether the noise estimates are sorted.

22. The noise estimator of claim 20, further comprising means for determining a dis-sorting distance before performing the sorting.